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SERMON,

DELIVERED APRIL 24, 1822,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. NATHANAEL COGSWELL,

AS COLLEAGUE PASTOR

7541, 342

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY

IN

YARMOUTH, MASS.

BY WARREN FAY, A. M.
Pastor of the First Church in Charlestown, Mass.

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SERMON.

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Acts vi, 4.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

It was considered the duty of the primitive churches to minister to the necessities of the saints. The distribution of their charities had devolved upon the Apostles. When the number of the disciples was multiplied, and the labors of the Apostles greatly increased, the Grecians murmured against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. To prevent all ground of complaint without interrupting their ministry, the twelve Apostles called the multitude of the disciples together, and proposed, that they should select seven men from among themselves of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, whom they might appoint over this business. This the Apostles did, not that they might live in indolence, but that they might give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And they were in truth eminently and uniformly devout; and they actually gave themselves without reluctance, or indolence, or any disposition to forsake their work, to the ministry of the word. Nothing turned them from their holy

purpose; nothing restrained their devotions; nothing diverted them from this benevolent and sacred work.

But what was the duty of the Apostles in this respect is the duty of the ordinary ministers of Christ. They are engaged in the same work, and have the same duties to perform. And if they have not difficulties of the same kind to encounter, they have those which are equally dangerous, and which render vigilance and resolution equally necessary. If the civil arm is not stretched out to obstruct them in their labors, or silence their preaching, a worldly influence is in continual operation to chill their devotions, and a thousand temptations are presented to hinder their faithful ministration of the word of life. The world has always exerted a greater and more deleterious influence over the Church and her ministers by its flatteries, than by its frowns. All the ministers of the gospel then should adopt the resolution, and imitate the example of the Apostles, by giving themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

I am led by the text and the occasion to *explain* and *enforce* the duty of ministers to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.

This does not imply that ministers must be always praying or preaching. You will not understand, when they sacredly resolve to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word, that they are to have no time for relaxation, for journeying, for enjoying the society of their friends, for superintending their domestic concerns, for carrying forward the benevolent designs of the Church. Some of these

are necessary for the maintenance of health and mental vigor; others are demanded by providence; and others, while they make ministers more ardent and faithful pastors, concentrate their efforts with those of the Church in general in the noblest works of Christian benevolence.

Ministers may be said to give themselves continually to prayer and the duties of the sacred office, when they devote themselves with their whole hearts to this work, and consecrate to it the best of their time, their best talents, their best thoughts, their most vigorous efforts, and make all their other concerns subservient to their sacred profession.

But to be more particular;

Ministers must give themselves continually to *prayer* by maintaining *statedly* devout intercourse with God in retirement. They are called by their office frequently to lead the devotions of others. And while they become so familiar with this service, and so often engage in it in the presence of others, there is danger of its becoming with them a heartless service. The form in such a case is almost imperceptibly substituted for the reality. The life and spirit of devotion gradually decline; and the warmth of the animal passions, the influence of sympathy, or a desire to lead the devotions of others with propriety,—kindle an unhallowed fire, which unsuspectingly passes in the mind of the minister for acceptable prayer.

It is admitted, that the frequency with which ministers are called to lead the devotions of others *should* render them eminently devout. But yet there is obvious danger, that the state of their own hearts, or the impression that prayer is in so many instances

regarded as a mere ceremony by those around them, or even the frequency of the service amidst so many temptations, will render their devotions formal and heartless. To avoid this evil and guard against this danger, ministers must maintain stated and devout intercourse with God in retirement. In the closet, where they will not pray, because men ask it, or expect it,—or because the service devolves upon them as ministers, they must bow the knee, and draw near to God in all the sincerity of their hearts. Here they must go to their heavenly Father, because their own souls desire it; and here they must enkindle at the throne of divine grace a heavenly spirit, which will glow in all their *social* and *public* devotions, and diffuse itself through all their duties. Every minister's study should be consecrated to *prayer*, as well as to the diligent investigation of divine truth. There "fast by the oracle of God" he should muse until the fire burns, and pour out his soul in fervent supplication, until he acquires a tone of piety, that is elevated and permanent. He must light the lamp of holy fervor in the study, if he would have it burn brightly in the sanctuary. He must kindle the fire of devotion in the closet, if he would have it animate all his other duties. No place on earth, save the altar and table of the Lord, should the minister of Christ consider more sacred, than his study. He should there maintain intercourse with God in the most intimate and spiritual manner. He should there come even to his seat, and converse with him, as a man converses with his friend.

Ministers should also maintain a devotional spirit *habitually*. This is what is more especially meant by giving themselves *continually* to prayer. They should

cultivate a devotional temper at all times and under all circumstances. Whatever may be thought of the world, or of professing Christians in general, it is expected of ministers, that they should be uniformly grave and devout. This comports with the sacredness of their office, the solemnity of their work, and the dignity of the ministerial character. This elevates them above the levity and sensuality of the world, and imposes a restraint upon vice, and an awe upon the minds of the ungodly. This erects a barrier against the rude assaults of the profane, and stays the approach of all indecent mirth. An habitually devotional temper, cherished by the faithful minister, imposes upon all with whom he associates a conviction of the presence of God, and makes them feel, that he is a man of prayer, "a legate of the skies."

But ministers must give themselves continually, not only to prayer, but to the ministry of the word.

They must do this,

1. By a diligent, critical, and prayerful study of the sacred scriptures. The scriptures are their directory; the source whence they are to draw all their instructions; the rule of faith according to which they are to form all their religious opinions; the statute book where they are to find all the laws to govern their own lives and the lives of others;—the charter on which they are to rest their title to eternal life. It is more important therefore, that they should understand the subjects contained in the scriptures, than any other subject, which the mind can contemplate.

But it should be remembered, that the Bible was written in two different languages, one of which for more than two thousand years has ceased to be a liv-

ing language; by more than forty different persons during a period of fifteen centuries;—referring to various customs now unknown; employing a great variety of imagery now out of use; and the latest portion of it in a different dialect from other authors in the same language. How then can ministers satisfy their own minds with regard to many things written on its sacred pages without critical and diligent research? How can they satisfy, instruct, and edify their people, without that intimate and thorough acquaintance with the Bible, to be gained only by laborious and prayerful investigation?

It is admitted, that a pious, teachable mind, under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, will perceive spiritual things, which the unsanctified mind will not. Yet it is true, that not even the most pious and devout can gain a critical and extensive knowledge of that sublime system of divine truth contained in the inspired volume without patient and persevering application. No man can become qualified to explain the scriptures, illustrate their meaning, and enforce their momentous truths, as a minister of the gospel *ought* to do, without a careful study of the Bible. While it is one great object of the ministry of the word to explain the Bible, to show clearly what it teaches, what it requires, what it promises, and what it threatens,—how can ministers of the gospel do this, unless they understand its meaning, and know how to explain it? To be able to do this, they must understand the rules of interpretation, and know *how* it is to be explained. This is to them of vast importance.

Men generally admit, that the Bible is the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice. This is

the fundamental principle of Protestant Christianity. But yet with the same acknowledged standard of faith, and practice, and Christian character, they differ widely and essentially in all these respects. But how can this be, when they adopt the same standard, the Bible? They differ widely and essentially as to the meaning of the Bible? But why do they thus differently interpret the Bible? Here we come to the root of the difficulty. They either adopt different rules of interpretation, or apply these rules in a different manner. And they never will agree as to the meaning of the sacred scriptures, until the rules of interpretation, and the application of these rules to the scriptures are better understood. The spiritual watchmen will never see eye to eye, until the correct rules of interpreting the Bible are settled and adopted. *Until this is done, religious controversy will not cease.* Here is explained the whole of that enigma, which has produced so much religious skepticism,—that the Bible should seem to support so many different and opposite opinions and systems, and that great and learned men should differ so widely with regard to its contents. Only let the correct rules of interpretation be understood, and adopted, and sacredly regarded; and much of this diversity of opinion on religious subjects would at once be done away. Let men also come to the study of the Bible with a humble, teachable temper, with a desire only to know and do the will of God, and it is obvious that in all its essential truths they would cordially agree. This must be the fact, if the Bible has any definite, intelligible, consistent meaning.

2. Ministers should give themselves continually to the ministry of the word, by a prayerful and studious

preparation of their public discourses. The ministry of the word in the common acceptation of the phrase more immediately respects the public preaching of it. From Sabbath to Sabbath the ministers of the Lord Jesus are to appear in the sanctuary, and lead the devotions of the assembly, and explain, enforce, and apply the great truths of revelation. The doctrines of the gospel they are to exhibit and illustrate in their connexion and consequences. The duties of Christianity they are to inculcate with great plainness; the obligations of moral beings they are to present, and urge, and fasten upon the conscience; the motives to holiness and pious effort they are to bring in contact with the heart; the realities of eternity disclosed in the word of life, they are to exhibit to the minds of their people in all their magnitude and importance, and in such a manner, that they shall never be forgotten. They are by their public discourses to wake up the attention of a thoughtless world to the momentous concerns of religion, and excite them immediately to flee from the wrath to come, and secure the great salvation.

Now can they expect to do all this with unstudied, hasty sermons? Can they *instruct* an audience by their preaching, unless their sermons contain instruction? Can they *enlighten* the mind in the knowledge of the truth, unless their sermons are full of light and knowledge? Can they rouse the conscience and affect the heart, unless their discourses glow with warmth, strike with force, seize and melt the affections, and enstamp the seal of divine truth? Can they be said to carry beaten oil into the sanctuary, when they appear before their people with discourses, which have

neither argument nor meaning, neither weight nor warmth, neither spirit nor form, neither connexion nor conclusion? What can they expect with such preparation for the pulpit, but that their hearers will sleep in the sanctuary one half of the day, and at home the other? What can they expect, but that the graces of Christians will languish, and the famishing life of piety nearly expire under such spiritual starvation?

Be it so, that they do not wholly neglect the study of the scriptures, nor religious reading, nor literary pursuits. But this falls greatly below their proper mark. It is by a *critical* and *diligent* investigation of the sacred volume, that they are to learn its meaning, and store their minds with its truths. And it should be remembered, these truths are not to be thrown out in a *disconnected*, *desultory* manner in their public discourses. For in this way they would neither be understood, nor retained, nor have any practical influence. In their public discourses the truths of revelation are to be illustrated, exhibited in their connexion, defended against objections, carried into their practical results, and faithfully applied to the heart and conscience. Now can all this be done in the most convincing, impressive manner in public discourses, unless they have been laboriously and prayerfully studied? Can all this be done without much time, and thought, and labor? It is not important here to agitate the question, whether sermons shall be delivered from manuscript, from memory, or from fixed and vigorous thought and premeditation. What we would maintain is, that they should be the result of prayerful study, and contain light and warmth; instruction for the understanding and food for the soul.

3. Ministers should give themselves *continually* to the ministry of the word by dispensing it at all proper times. They are not only to dispense it statedly on the Sabbath, but occasionally from house to house. In their parochial visits and in their various intercourse with their people they are to exhibit the truths and urge the duties of Christianity in a discreet, earnest, and affectionate manner, as they have opportunity. They are never to forget under any circumstances, that they are ministers of the word of life, that they are to know nothing among their people, save Jesus Christ and him crucified, and that every occasion favorable to impress divine truth is to be improved. They are to dispense the word of life to the young in schools, and places for catechetical instruction; to the various collections of their people gathered in different districts;—in assemblies for prayer and religious improvement; at the houses of the aged and infirm, of the poor and remote, and from week to week statedly, as they shall be able, and circumstances require. They are to seize every occasion to minister the word of life, and make known the way of salvation.

So did the Apostle Paul. He went forth and preached in every city and village and cottage, where it was practicable, that word of life, which came down from heaven. He testified publicly and from house to house "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." So far as will comport with their health, and their various duties and cares and labors, ministers should dispense the word of life, not only on the Sabbath, but at other times; not only in the sanctuary, but in other places appointed for the purpose.

We proceed in the *second place* to *enforce* the duty of ministers to give themselves continually to the ministry of the word and to prayer.

1. By this God is glorified. The glory of God is revealed in his word. This brings out to the contemplation of men the hidden recesses of the divine nature, which they could have discovered in no other way. This is the brightest medium, by which the divine excellence is reflected upon the human mind. To dispense this word of life faithfully therefore is to make known the divine character, and present to human contemplation the divine glory. It is to proclaim that infinite holiness, and mercy, and justice, and goodness, which will be seen with awful clearness at the judgment day. It is to bring Jehovah near, and place the infinite excellencies of his character before the mind; and to elicit the feelings of men towards him.

Hence Jehovah declares, "My word shall not return unto me void." Whether it be a savor of life or death, it will make known the glory of its divine Author. It cannot be faithfully preached, but God is seen, his character is disclosed, and his claims enforced. While therefore ministers should continually seek the advancement of the divine glory, they should give themselves continually to the ministry of the word for this sacred purpose.

A *second* consideration to enforce this duty is, that men are saved instrumentally by the preaching of the word. The faithful ministry of the word is suited to rouse them from their moral slumbers, and awaken their attention to their immortal interests. It describes their sinfulness, places their danger before

them, presents those sublime and glorious objects, which they ought supremely to regard; and presses upon the heart and conscience the most weighty motives to repentance and uniform obedience.

The ministry of the word is the grand instrument employed by infinite wisdom in the salvation of men. It is an obvious fact that more become real Christians, and live as heirs of immortal glory, where the gospel is statedly and faithfully preached, than where it is unfaithfully, or but seldom preached. The preaching of the cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God to the salvation of men; for it hath pleased him by the foolishness of preaching to save them, that believe. And how many have been renewed, and become heirs of salvation, under the faithful ministry of the word? Behold three thousand added to the Lord under one pungent and faithful sermon from the lips of Peter;—and multitudes more under the ministry of the Apostles! Nearly all, who have since been sanctified, have been sanctified through the truth, exhibited by a faithful ministry.

It is called the ministry of reconciliation, because it is the grand instrument of reconciling men to God, and preparing them for heavenly glory. The Apostle to the Gentiles represents the ministry of the word as almost indispensable to the salvation of men. He says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall men call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a *preacher?* So then faith cometh by *hearing;* and hearing by the word of God." The preaching of the word usually precedes faith; and faith precedes salvation. But if the faith-

ful ministry of the word is to promote the salvation of men, surely those appointed to dispense it, should give themselves continually to their ministry. They are as solemnly bound to do this, as they are to seek by their highest efforts the salvation of their people.

The responsibility of the sacred ministry, the extent and immense importance of the duties it embraces, and the momentous consequences it involves—require, that those, who engage in it, should give themselves continually to it. If there be any employment or business on earth, that demands the whole time and heart and talents and efforts of men, it is the ministry of the word. This is a concern, the duties and responsibility of which, might well make Gabriel tremble!

3. Ministers should give themselves continually to *prayer*, because this will have the most salutary influence upon their whole character and labors.

Continual prayer will make them *humble*. There are many circumstances in the lives of ministers, which too often awaken pride and self-complacency. They hold the most honorable office, and are engaged in the noblest employment ever assigned to mortals. While their office is respected, if they act in character, they are respected. They receive the first and most respectful attentions of their people, and sometimes perhaps hear the injudicious flatteries of affectionate friends. These and various other circumstances are suited to fan the flame of pride in their hearts, and awaken arrogance and self-complacency. But let them give themselves continually to prayer, and all this self esteem will give place to deep humility. Only let their eye see the holiness of Jehovah in the closet, or in the sanctuary, and they will "abhor themselves,

and repent in dust and ashes." Let them maintain intimate communion with their Lord and Master, and like him they will be meek and lowly in heart.

Continual prayer will promote in ministers *sincere benevolence.* It is the indispensable duty of the ministers of the gospel to show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob, even professing Christians, their sins. It is their duty to reprove vice both in public and private. It is their duty also to proclaim the terrors of the law, as well as the offers of mercy, and the thunders of Sinai, as well as the melting accents of redeeming love. But they are in danger of doing this with an improper spirit and in an improper manner. They are in danger of administering reproof with harshness or bitterness; of attempting to refute error with unfairness or censoriousness; of proclaiming the terrors of the law in an angry, violent manner,—as though they had rather hear the thunderings and earthquakes, and see the smoke and fire of Sinai, than to behold their people melted at the sight to repentance and submission.

But let them give themselves continually to prayer, and they will be preserved from all this. They will go from their devotions deeply impressed with their own unworthiness, and in *compassion* and *kindness* warn the wicked of his danger, reprove the backslider, arouse the slumbering; and, with the deepest solicitude and the tenderest emotions proclaim the tremendous threatenings of the law, and present the awful doom, which awaits the impenitent. They will uncover the pit of despair, and expose the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone with the most melting anxiety, lest their impenitent hearers should sink

into it, to rise no more!—Yes, they would tell them "even *weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Ministers should give themselves continually to prayer, because it will make them *active* and *persevering*. They have many temptations to inactivity, and are in great danger of becoming indolent in their work. They have many obstacles to surmount, many trials to endure, many foes to face; and are in danger of relaxing their efforts, relinquishing many of their best plans of usefulness, and conforming to those, who wish them to do but little at moral reform. And how shall they guard against these dangers, and keep alive the noble spirit of activity and perseverance? Where, but in habitual devotion, shall they find a mighty, holy impulse, which will bear them constantly forward amidst the most powerful temptations to remit their labors, to sacrifice their fidelity, and relinquish their most useful plans? Let them go to the throne of grace, and increase their benevolence and zeal; let their devotions enkindle in their hearts the spirit of Christ, and his love will constrain them to persevere in well doing, to labor more actively, to pursue their work with more ardor, and to preach and pray with greater earnestness.

Ministers should give themselves continually to prayer, because it will give *consistency to their characters.* Who, that ministers at the altar, has not occasion to weep over his own deficiency in this respect! And how can that minister be useful among his people, enforce the religion he preaches, or honor his divine Master, whose character is marked with *glaring* inconsistencies? Though he may be a man of splendid

talents, profound learning, and excel as a writer and orator, it is likely he will do more hurt than good, and lead more souls to perdition than to heaven.

But let ministers give themselves continually to prayer, and it will preserve them from those glaring inconsistencies and sinful imprudencies, which might prevent their able and well directed efforts. Habitual prayer would render them habitually grave and discreet. It would exhibit them uniformly as the ministers of the Lord Jesus, and give a noble elevation and dignity to their characters, force to their instructions, confidence in their counsels, and weight to their example. It would render them the consistent and devoted ambassadors of Christ.

Ministers should give themselves continually to prayer, because it will enable them to *preach with the greatest effect.* While an attempt to please with a fine written essay, to amuse with the flowers of rhetoric, to excite admiration by the powers of oratory, or to awaken emotion by playing upon the passions, may produce some transitory effect, and secure some applause;—all this falls far below the deep and salutary impression a faithful minister aims to produce. Let ministers give themselves continually to prayer, and study and deliver their sermons under the influence of a heavenly ardor, awakened by their fervent devotions, and they will be truly eloquent. Their discourses will have a clearness, a divine savor, a glow of thought, richness of sentiment, weight of argument, and powerful application, which will impress the mind. They will be delivered with that energy and pathos, which will rouse the conscience, and affect the heart. Genuine eloquence, that which becomes the sacred-

ness and dignity of the pulpit, is that, which is enkindled, and chastened, and elevated by habitual, fervent devotion.

Ministers of the gospel should give themselves continually to prayer, because it will *sanctify their whole ministry.* Under its influence they will consecrate their studies, their private and public instructions, their time and talents and influence to the Lord. It will lead them to pursue one object, and this the most grand and noble ever regarded by mortals;—the advancement of the divine glory in the salvation of men. It will imprint on their foreheads in legible characters the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." Who then, that ministers at the altar of the Lord of hosts, will not give himself continually to prayer and the ministry of the word?

My Beloved Brother,

It gives me peculiar pleasure to witness your establishment here as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, under so auspicious circumstances. You are now by many prayers and vows to consecrate yourself to the sacred office, and from this hour to give yourself continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. You are to lead the devotions of this people in the sanctuary, in meetings for religious improvement and united supplication, at houses of mourning and death, in the chambers of sickness, and on all proper occasion. You will then, my dear Brother, feel the importance of being yourself a man of prayer. You will maintain stated and spiritual intercourse with God *in retirement.* You will cherish *habitually* a devotional

spirit; carry with you the presence of your divine Master, wherever you go; and let your people ever discover in you that meekness of wisdom, that consistency of character, that benevolence of heart, that practical exemplification of your preaching, that *elevated piety*, which are the result only of habitual and fervent prayer.

You are to give yourself to the ministry of the word among this people. You will study the scriptures daily, critically, and prayerfully; and in all your investigations apply the correct rules of interpretation. You will believe for yourself with regard to the true meaning of the Bible, and preach what you believe. You will prepare your public discourses with much study and prayer, and with deep solicitude, that they may become a savor of life to your people; and you will never bring into the sanctuary other than beaten oil, nor offer in this sacred place, that which cost you nothing. You will dispense to this people the word of life from week to week and from house to house, as you have opportunity. You will give your heart, your thoughts, your time, and your energies to your great work, and remember that these are all consecrated to the ministry of the gospel, and cannot be turned to any other use.

You will enter into the labors of your revered and aged Colleague, whose ministry has been unusually long and peaceful, and whose heart is cheered to see his people receiving another Pastor, who will be with him as a son with a father. You will be remembered in his prayers, and he will greatly rejoice to behold this people for whose good he has so long labored, walking in the truth under your ministrations, and

gathered into the fold of Christ by your instrumentality.

It is our privilege, my dear Brother, to live in an age of benevolent effort, of Christian enterprize. Ministers of the gospel must bear a leading part in the benevolent operations, which bless the present age. To lend your own influence and labors, and bring the charities and prayers of your beloved people in aid of the great system of Christian benevolence will be your duty and your delight. Nor will you ever imagine, that all the efforts you can make for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom abroad will diminish in the least your attachment to its interests at home. My beloved Brother, your great work is before you. To prayer and to the ministry of the word you are to give yourself continually from this day to the day of your death. Are you ready to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Look up to the great Shepherd, and hear him say, "My grace is sufficient for thee. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

My beloved fathers and brethren in the ministry;

While engaged in these solemn services, is it not a proper season to call to mind our ordination vows, and review our past labors and lives? We solemnly covenanted, when consecrated to the sacred office, to give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. Our divine master requires this at our hands. Apostolic example binds us to do this. Nothing less than the immortal interests of immortal beings are involved in our faithful or unfaithful ministry. Angels

have been constantly watching us to discover our devotedness, and carry the tidings of our success to the redeemed host, to increase their joy and swell their songs of praise. And the record of our ministry thus far has been entered in that book, which will be opened, and out of which we shall be judged at the great day.

Let us pause and enquire, what is the record of our ministry in heaven? What testimony have angels borne? Have we given ourselves cordially and continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word? Have we been instant in season and out of season, and warned our people night and day with tears? Have we studied and prayed and preached and toiled for their salvation? Or are we ready to shrink from such an investigation? Let us remember, that our divine Master will soon come, and call us to give an account of our stewardship. And if we feel, that our work is not done, that we have no joyful account now to render,—that we are not ready to meet our Lord,—let us renew our ordination vows, and resume our work with a fixed determination to give ourselves continually to it, and spend and be spent for the salvation of our people. This is a day, when the *ordinary* labors of the ministry are not sufficient. Those, who minister at the altar, are called to *extraordinary* labors, to uncommon efforts, to aid in bringing forward a scene of divine wonders which will astonish the world; to become benefactors to the nations of the millennium; and to usher in a period, when the heavens will drop down righteousness, and the whole earth be full of the glory of the Lord.

A word to this numerous assembly, and I have done.

The faithful ministry of the word is to you, my respected auditors, of immense importance. It reveals the divine glory, brings Jehovah near, and fastens his claims upon you. It presents to you the offers of mercy, and points out the way to heaven. It exhibits the sanctions of the divine law, the conditions of eternal life, the most weighty motives to compliance, the fearful consequences of noncompliance, and the amazing, awful retributions of eternity. It declares, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; —and where will you then stand? What sentence will you then hear? What retribution will you then receive?—Unless you are begotten again and sanctified by the word of truth, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. And if the ministry of the word rise up in judgment against you, how will it enhance your everlasting misery? "If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment must he be accounted worthy," who despises the gospel of Christ, the ministry of reconciliation!

CHARGE,

BY THE REV. JOHN SIMPKINS,

OF BREWSTER.

By prayer and laying on of the hands of the Presbytery Mr. Nathanael Cogswell is now publicly consecrated to the Gospel ministry—and is hereby invested with all the privileges, and obligated to discharge the duties of a minister of Jesus Christ.—He is moreover especially ordained this day to take the oversight of the Congregational Society belonging to this place, as their regular pastor.

One of the solemnities appertaining to the present occasion is a *charge* to officiate with fidelity in this highly responsible character.

Being now inducted into the sacred office, you will permit me, dear Sir, by the appointment and in the name and behalf of the ecclesiastical Council here convened, to tender thee a solemn charge to be faithful in the performance of the various and momentous duties which hereby devolve upon thee. You are to go in and out before this people as their guide and spiritual overseer;—to feed them with the knowledge and understanding of divine truth—to shew them the path which leads to happiness, and break to them the bread of life.

You are to lead in the solemn exercises of devotion,—to preach the Gospel,—to administer its ordinances,—to preside in the discipline of the Church—and to bless the people in the name of the Lord—or rather to invoke his blessing on them from the house of God.

And now we "charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is to judge the quick and the dead," that you fulfil the ministry which you this day receive.

Instruct the ignorant—comfort the feeble mind, support the weak—be patient to all men—"Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering."

In reproving any species of iniquity let it be evident from your manner of speaking, that your abhorrence of sin is perfectly consistent with the tenderest compassion, and undissembled good will to the transgressor; "speaking the truth in love."

We exhort thee in the language of holy writ to "covet the best gifts." Beware of offering unto the Lord "that which cost thee nothing," but bring to the sanctuary *beaten* oil. For which purpose we charge thee to bear in mind, the exhortation to Timothy by an inspired apostle, "Give thyself to reading, meditation and prayer, that thy profiting may appear unto all."

We do most solemnly charge thee never to lose sight of thine accountability to God. Seek his approbation above all things.—Let it be your constant aim and prayer to obtain it. And in order to this let *his word* be the standard of your preaching. Regard it as the only *infallible* standard. Teach not for doctrines the commandments of uninspired mortals—but bring their sentiments and your own to this unerring test of truth. And that you may not mistake the true meaning of his word, let all your researches after divine truth be accompanied with fervent supplications to him with whom is the residue of the spirit. And to prayer be persuaded to add the use of *proper means* for ascertaining the true sense of the divine word.

Attend carefully to the *main design* and evident scope of each passage. Form not your opinions by merely incidental expressions, but carefully compare scripture with scripture, that passages more ambiguous and obscure may be elucidated, by those which are clear and obvious in their meaning.

I charge thee to consult the sacred volume with a mind open to conviction as becomes a friend to truth. Take heed that you wrest not the scriptures from their true meaning and intent to support a favorite system, or to vindicate any preconceived opinions, but faithfully test your opinions on theological subjects by that unerring guide. Let your system of doctrines naturally flow from that pure fountain, remembering that the streams which are forced from thence by human hands, may become impure and polluted in their course.

You may indeed profit by the experience of those who have trodden for many years the path of ministerial duty. They who

have travelled over the ground before you, may impart to you much useful information, and greatly aid you in your researches after truth,—but while you avail yourself of the labors and discoveries of others, we *charge* thee incessantly to recur to the sacred chart presented in the inspired volume that you be not led astray by the errors of others—nor be deceived by those who have themselves been deceived. To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to them, "regard them not." "Call no man master upon earth, for one is your master even Christ."

As protestants we must protest against every attempt to "Lord it over God's heritage." If an inspired Apostle declares "not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of each others joy," how much more does it become their successors at this remote period to adopt the same sentiment.

Be sober, be modest, be candid in your researches and disquisitions, as becomes a fallible mortal. Entertain a becoming sense of human fallability that you may cherish due candor towards those whose opinions may not perfectly coincide with your own. Let that candor be connected with *piety*, that it may not be the offspring of *indifference* to truth, but the result of a becoming sense of human imperfection.

Remember that every difference of opinion does not imply a defect in the heart. While therefore you denounce sentiments which you conceive to be erroneous and of pernicious tendency, let your denunciation be against *doctrines* rather than *persons*.

Strength of argument, may surely be exhibited without asperity of language or bitterness of heart. If arguments bear hard, the fault cannot with propriety be attributed to the preacher, but to the errors they detect.

While you speculate, beware that you do not (as is too often the case with men of studious minds,) attach *undue* importance to the objects of your speculation, as though they were at all times fundamental, and absolutely necessary to be embraced by others. Believe with caution, differ with moderation, be supremely solicitous about things by which all may be edified.

Especially do we give it in charge to thee to make thyself particularly acquainted with the state of the flock, now committed to thy pastoral care; that you may be enabled to make a judicious selection of subjects appropriate to their character and

condition; that you may emphatically speak to them *a word in season*, and be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

They are to be fed with the bread of life. Seek not then to amuse them with barren speculations. Do not thus waste the precious moments in which you stand in this place. Your time and theirs is much too valuable to be so trifled with. Let the subjects of your discourses be interesting, and be directed to the *conscience* and the *heart*.

Let not the love of popularity lead you astray. Speak not as pleasing men but God. Be not unduly solicitous to please men but for their edification. And that as much as in you lies you may through a divine blessing promote their edification, speak *feelingly*. Let your address come *from* the *heart*, if you would that it should *reach* the heart. In exhorting you however to speak feelingly, we do not recommend to you to be noisy and boisterous. This men may do, and speak apparently from the heart, yet possess in *reality*, but little religious sensibility. Let your speech drop as the rain and distil as the dew, with tenderness and affection, that it may soften and penetrate the heart. In order thus to address your hearers, let the thought be frequently present to your mind, that you and they are both to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And if at that august tribunal, the question be put to them how they have heard,—to you the command will be directed, "Son of man give an account of thy stewardship." Forget not that "it is required of a steward that he be found faithful." Let the warning voice of holy writ sound in your ears and reach your heart, "Son of man I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die: and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Speak then as a dying man to dying men, from a mind deeply impressed with the solemnities of approaching death, judgment and eternity. With eternity in view and the judgment seat before you, how can you but be *serious* and *in earnest*.

Indeed under a sense of the complicated and arduous duties that now devolve upon you, and the various characters and dispositions with which you may have to deal, we should not be surprised if you exclaim with astonishment "who is sufficient for these things," unless the prospect be relieved by the animating declaration "My grace is sufficient for thee."

In your *pastoral* visits the sick and afflicted have an affecting claim to your attention, which we trust you will not overlook. While you administer with a sympathizing spirit, consolation to the mourner, we wish you to seize the favorable moment, when the heart is softened by sorrow, to impart to it religious improvement.

We charge thee to take heed not only to thy *doctrine* but to *thyself*, to thy life and conversation. "Let it be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ." If precepts teach, but examples move, then "be thou an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity."

As a supplement amply sufficient to make up every defect in this charge, we recommend to your prayerful attention that given at length by St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy and Titus.

In conclusion, let me remind you my brother that "he who winneth souls is wise." May this wisdom be eminently yours. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." May you ever exhibit in your disposition and deportment the amiable spirit of the gospel—tempering firmness with mildness in the discharge of duty and thus become *a beloved disciple* "of Jesus." Then when the great Shepherd shall collect the members of his fold from the four quarters of the earth, may you receive from his gracious lips the heart-cheering benediction, "Well done good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY WILLIAM COGSWELL, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CHURCH IN DEDHAM.

"God is love." This is manifest from creation, providence, and redemption. And the benevolence of the Deity is as boundless as His works, and as endless as eternity. Its object is happiness—the highest possible happiness. To accomplish this object, worthy of God, the great Eternal reared the pillars of the universe; gave birth to the material and intellectual worlds; created men and angels, furnished with moral powers and faculties, and capable of endless progression in knowledge, holiness, and felicity. To accomplish this great and glorious object, he, also, provided salvation for apostate man, at the expense of the sufferings and death of Jesus. What principle, other than infinite benevolence, would have induced the Eternal Father to consent, that his only and dearly beloved son should die "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God?" And what, but this principle, would have led the adorable Son to leave the realms of glory, assume human nature, live in this rebellious world, and finally suffer the most painful and ignominious death, that a consistent foundation might be laid for the pardon and salvation of his most inveterate enemies? What principle, but that, which is supremely delighted with the highest possible happiness of the moral system, and which ardently desires to promote it, would have prompted to these things? The co-operation of the Father and the Son, in devising and executing the plan of redemption, proves, at least, their unity of affection and pursuit in the greatest act of benevolence, known to man. A moral principle, similar to that, by which the Father and Son are governed in planning

and prosecuting the glorious work of redemption, is imparted to all those, to whom this work is savingly applied. In this sense, they are one with Christ, as he is one with the Father. The moment they become assimilated to the benevolent Savior in temper of heart, they are united with Him in the great object of His affection and pursuit. They rejoice in the happiness of the intelligent and moral system, and desire its extension to the highest possible degree. By this glorious principle of universal benevolence, the real disciples of our blessed Lord of all countries and denominations, are governed. This celestial principle, amiable and sublime, warms the breast of all the true Ministers of Jesus Christ, and is an indissoluble bond of union between them. However different they may be in speculation, their hearts are one, and their prime and ultimate end, one. They derive their qualifications, credentials, employment, and success from the same Source. They love their divine Master, love one another, love the prosperity of Zion, and are co-workers in its advancement.

To express their equality in office, their union of heart, their fraternal affection, their duty and resolution to assist each other in the noble and arduous work, to which they were called, the Apostles of our divine Lord instituted the ceremony of giving *the right hand* to those who they ordained to take part with them in the ministry of reconciliation. James, Cephas, and John gave unto Paul and Barnabas *the right hands of fellowship.*

After Apostolic example, and the usage of our Churches, permit me, my dear brother, in the name and behalf of this ecclesiastical Ordaining Council to present you *this right hand of fellowship.* This religious rite is no empty ceremony. Its import is high and sacred. By this solemn public act, we tender the fellowship of the Churches we represent, to the Church of Christ in this place. We acknowledge this to be a regular Church, "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;" and pledge ourselves to perform towards it all the kind offices of christian endearment and communion. By this solemn public act, too, we acknowledge you to be an Ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, regularly inducted into the Pastoral office in this Church. We welcome you as a fellow laborer into the vineyard of our common Lord. We embrace you as a companion and brother, hereby giving you the strongest proof of our affection, approbation, confidence, and readiness to

communicate with you in all the duties and services of christian and ministerial fellowship. We invite you to share with us in all the privileges, rights, authorities, labors, and delights of the holy Ministry, and hold ourselves inviolably pledged to do all in our power to support, comfort, and prosper you in your sacred vocation.

Thus sincerely tendering you and this Church these kind offices of christian and ministerial friendship, duty, and intercourse, with pleasure and confidence we receive *your hand* as a pledge of willingness and purpose on your part and the part of this Church, to reciprocate them. May our mutual vows be registered on high, and be faithfully performed.

Suffer me, also, on this occasion, my dear brother, to offer you *my hand* as a token of my own personal friendship for you. I give you my hand and my heart. Here natural feelings incline me to vent the overflowings of fraternal affection, but duty forbids. Dear are we to each other by nature, affection, and grace; dear also may we be to each other by the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors for Christ, and, in his stead, are to beseech sinners to become reconciled to God. Let us be boldly faithful to our divine Master, affectionately faithful to the souls of men, and conscientiously faithful to our ownselves. Then may we take heaven to record, that we are pure from the blood of all men. We felicitate you, my brother, on your introduction to so pleasant a part of the gospel vineyard,—a part where puritanical habits, and puritanical sentiments prevail to so good a degree. You will esteem it a privilege, also, that the aged Pastor of this Church still lives, and will rejoice in the opportunity, which he may have to bless you, your and his people, in the name of the Lord. We trust you will derive much profit from his prudent counsel, and friendly assistance. And we doubt not, but you will treat him with all that respect, tenderness, and filial affection, which his character, age, and circumstances demand. "The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." May He inspire you with His love, anoint you with His Spirit, and clothe you with His salvation. May your ministry be long, happy, and successful; and having turned many to righteousness, and finished your course with joy, may you shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as a star forever and ever.

While we congratulate the senior Pastor of this Church upon the present pleasing solemnity, we cannot but gratefully notice the goodness of Divine Providence to him, in having afforded him opportunity to labor so long and with so much success in the vineyard of our Divine Lord. May you, Rev. and Dear Sir, obtain grace to be faithful even to the end. We wish you much happiness in this your Son and fellow-laborer in the Gospel. May you, in the evening of life, enjoy the supporting and comforting influences of that religion you have preached to others. May you be animated by the near prospects of a better world, meet your approaching dissolution with Christian hope, fortitude, and triumph, finally depart in peace, and be admitted to joy, unspeakable and full of glory;—to the high and rich rewards of a faithful servant of Christ.

We close by mingling our congratulations with this Church, on seeing the man of their united choice set over them in the Lord, as Colleague with their aged Pastor. Dearly Beloved, with lively sensibility, we, the Elders and Messengers of the Churches here represented, salute you on this occasion. We bow the knee in devout thankfulness to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that according to His mercies and the multitude of His loving kindnesses, He has remembered you, and given you in gospel order, and Christian affection, a Pastor as we trust after His own heart. Receive him as an ascension gift of the Great Head of the Church. "Esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake." "Brethren, pray for him, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified among you." Long may you know by happy experience, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Most affectionately, we commend you, and your senior and junior Pastor to him, who walketh amidst the golden candlesticks, and holdeth the stars in His right hand. May you all, at last, be admitted to regions of unclouded light, perfect love, and everlasting bliss.

And now "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou and the ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; let Thy saints shout for joy; and let all the people say, Amen."

ADDRESS

TO THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY,

BY THE REV. TIMOTHY DAVIS,

OF WELLFLEET.

Appointed by the Council on this interesting occasion, to address the Church and Society in this place, I would express to you our cordial congratulations on your favorable religious prospects.

Beloved brethren, and friends, our most ardent prayers and hopes are, that the union now formed with your junior pastor may, through the blessing of Heaven, result in your temporal peace and prosperity, and more especially in your spiritual welfare and improvement.

In order to this, we wish you to recollect, and to be deeply impressed with the fact, that the duties, interest, and happiness, of ministers of the Gospel and of the people of their charge, are in many respects *reciprocal*, or mutually correspondent.

If, then, it be the duty of your Pastor, to preach the Gospel to you, to pray for you, to labor for your salvation and that of your children, to visit you, and to sympathise with you in your joys and your sorrows; *ever remember your correspondent duties.*

Attend his public ministrations at all times, when practicable. Join with him cordially in his prayers. Hear his instructions with attention, candor, and self-application. Receive with meekness the word of truth from his lips; let it be mixed with faith in your hearts; and be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only; that it may save your souls.

Help him by your prayers. At the family altar and in the closet cease not to pour out your hearts before God, in whom is all our

sufficiency, and from whom comes all our success, in fervent supplications for him and for the success of his labors among you. If you are faithful in your prayers, you may confidently expect the richest blessings from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ through his instrumentality. But if you neglect to pray for the blessings of Heaven on him and on his ministry, he may perhaps be permitted to labor in vain, as it respects your improvement and salvation, and to spend his strength for nought.

Let all persons among you apply to him, as there may be occasion, for counsel and instruction in their spiritual concerns;—when anxious to know, what they shall do to be saved, that he may direct them to the all-sufficient Savior, and guide their feet into the path of peace and life;—when cast down, depressed, under mental or spiritual dejection, that he may administer to them the precious consolations of the Gospel of mercy and peace;—and when in doubt about divine truth, or about their duty in perplexing circumstances, that he may assist them in removing their difficulties.

Receive him in his pastoral visits, as the messenger of Jesus Christ; listen affectionately to his counsels and consolations; and grant him all possible encouragement and facilities, to impart religious admonitions and instructions to you and to your children. Remember, that whatever you do, to render his ministry among you pleasant and successful, will of course contribute to your own religious comfort and edification, and to the spiritual improvement of the rising generation. Beware, therefore, of every thing which has a tendency to obstruct the success of his labors; and by every means in your power consult and promote his usefulness. "Esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves."

Solemnly consider, dear brethren, that under his ministry you will be forming characters for eternity. If you are truly penitent for your sins, sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you lead sober, righteous, and godly lives; you will be continually ripening for the heavenly state, and your prospects will shine brighter and brighter, as you draw nearer the mansions of perfect and perpetual day. But if you live in sin, and reject or pervert the Gospel, being disobedient to the truth, and having pleasure in unrighteousness; you will be vessels of wrath, fitting for everlasting destruction, growing worse and worse under the very means

of grace, which you might and should improve to your eternal salvation. That this may not be the case with any of you, deeply consider and realize, that the blessed Gospel, to save your immortal souls, must be cordially embraced and obeyed. We trust, it will be affectionately preached to you in its simplicity and purity. See that you all so receive it with affection and faith, as to experience its holy and sanctifying efficacy, as to worship God in the Spirit and to rejoice in Christ Jesus. The immense importance of the Christian ministry arises from its eternal consequences. Under a deep impression of this momentous truth, so discharge all your duties, relative to your junior pastor and his usefulness among you, that his ministrations may be to you all a savor of life unto life, and not to any of you a savor of death unto death. May such be your prayers for one another, and the performance of all your mutual duties, that when the Lord Jesus Christ, the believer's life and hope, shall come to judge the world, both you and your beloved pastors may appear with him in glory.

Neither you, nor we, can on this occasion forget your venerable senior pastor. You doubtless feel very thankful for his long life and protracted usefulness among you. We hope, that you will yet receive much benefit from his prayers, his counsels, and his example. You will long hold and cherish in your grateful remembrance his past labors and instructions, and will console and cheer him in the closing scenes of his life by Christian and friendly attentions.

Now, beloved brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace. May the Lord bless you, and pour out his spirit abundantly on you all, and greatly increase his church here. May he delight to dwell among you, and multiply truth, grace, and peace to you all, according to "the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ." Amen.